

BEFORE THE
POSTAL REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20268-0001

RIO NIDO COMMUNITY POST OFFICE
RIO NIDO, CA 95471

Docket No. A2017-2

RESPONSES OF THE UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE TO
QUESTIONS 1-4 OF CHAIRMAN'S INFORMATION REQUEST NO. 1

The United States Postal Service hereby provides its responses to the above-listed questions of Chairman's Information Request No. 1, issued on July 24, 2017. By Order No. 4027 issued on August 3, 2017, the Commission extended the due date for the responses to August 8, 2017. Each question is stated verbatim and followed by the response.

Respectfully submitted,

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

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August 8, 2017

**RESPONSES OF THE UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE
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1. Please explain the criteria used to determine eligibility for delivery service and whether or not Rio Nido customers are eligible for this service.

RESPONSE:

The level of delivery service for a community is determined based on the characteristics of the area to be served and the methods deemed necessary to provide adequate service by the Postal Service. Some of the factors considered in this determination include the road conditions, the density of delivery points, and the workload associated with delivery activities.

The method of service offered to Rio Nido customers was determined based on an evaluation of the factors and criteria described above. Specifically, responsible personnel considered the following factors in deciding that delivery service would not be a viable option:

- Rural delivery in Rio Nido is not feasible due to the topography of this unincorporated area. The roads in Rio Nido are very narrow and not conducive to delivery vehicle travel, and year-round vehicle passage is not reliable or safe due to seasonal flooding and substandard road conditions. In addition, many homes are located on steep hills above the road, and delivery of parcels or other mail would create a safety concern for rural carriers.
- The use of Cluster Box Units (CBUs) is not feasible because of safety and security concerns. In some low lying areas, Rio Nido is susceptible to flooding that would make the CBUs inaccessible.

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- Delivery service has never been provided to Rio Nido residents in ZIP Code 95471, and these residents have been served through post office box service provided by a contractor-operated retail unit. Most of the post office boxes used by Rio Nido residents are Group E boxes provided at no cost to the customer.
- Existing rural routes in Guerneville could not absorb deliveries in Rio Nido and continue to meet customer service commitments for mail delivery and dispatch without the establishment of a new route to serve Rio Nido customers, which would be costly.
- Rio Nido customers will continue to receive no fee Group E post office box delivery service from the nearby Guerneville Post Office, and now have 24-hour access, 7 days a week, to mail receptacles.

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2. What is the Postal Service's best estimate of the maximum number of delivery points that would be required if delivery service were to be provided to Rio Nido customers not currently receiving delivery service?

RESPONSE:

The methods of service available to a community are determined based on multiple factors and criteria, which are described above in the response to Question 1. The appropriate methods of service for a community cannot be determined based solely on information regarding the number of delivery points. That said, it is estimated that the number of delivery points that would be required if delivery service were provided to Rio Nido customers would be one centralized delivery point, assuming that the Postal Service could acquire a parcel of land that would accommodate 22 CBUs, which we estimate would occupy a parcel of land that measures at least 400 square feet. However, the concerns identified in the responses to Questions 1 and 3 weigh against doing so.

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3. Has the Postal Service considered the possibility of providing delivery service to Rio Nido customers? Please include an explanation of whether or not this would be a feasible alternative to a Community Post Office and whether or not this possibility was discussed with the Rio Nido customers.

RESPONSE:

The Postal Service determined that delivery service to Rio Nido customers is not a feasible alternative. In reaching this conclusion, the Postal Service considered the following factors, in addition to the concerns identified in the response to Question 1:

- The Guerneville Post Office has expanded its hours of access and now offers Saturday retail window services and 24-hour access for customers to retrieve mail and parcels.
- The distance from Rio Nido to the Guerneville Post Office is two miles.
- There is more than one main road to Guerneville.
- The closest grocery store to Rio Nido is the Safeway located across from Mills Street, and the Guerneville Post Office is located on Mills Street. The Safeway sells stamps.
- The provision of service through the Guerneville Post Office has enabled customers to keep their ZIP Code, original post office box numbers, boxes, and the "Rio Nido" community name.
- The Guerneville Post Office is safe and secure.

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Although the Postal Service did not discuss providing delivery service to Rio Nido customers, it explained how the nearby Guerneville Post Office would provide services to customers after expiration of the contract for the Rio Nido CPU by letter dated June 15, 2017 that was distributed to Rio Nido customers, door and window notices posted on June 15, 2017, and a press release dated June 16, 2017.

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4. Petitioners state that “nearly all of the homes in this community do not receive street delivery.” Amended Petition for Review of Postal Service Final Determination, July 3, 2017, at ¶ 16. Please explain why this is the current delivery status for these customers, and discuss all delivery options that may be considered for Rio Nido customers.

RESPONSE:

See responses to Questions 1, 2, and 3.